

Gresham Arthur Academy Teacher's Corner

February 2010

Volume 3, Issue 5

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New Things Happening In Kindergarten

February Birthdays

Benjamin Lifanov
02/02/03

Dexter Albright
02/04/99

Jordan Ferguson
02/08/00

Nathan Nelson
02/10/00

Emily Eggers
02/11/03

Madison Primiano
02/11/04

Emily Strutz
02/20/04

Tyson Aquino
02/23/99

Happy February!

The kindergarten class has been talking about what "big kid" classroom behavior looks like. Recently we have needed to have reminders about what is expected as a kindergartener. Here is a list of things we talk about:

- Mistakes are ok, but it is never ok to laugh when someone makes one.
- Don't copy what other students say. Sometimes it seems easy to copy the loudest answer, but if that answer is wrong then you made a mistake too. Do what you know is right.
- When working, look only at your paper. It is not ok to write what other kids are writing (Parents, this is a new idea. They don't know that it is called cheating or copying yet. We will be working a lot on doing our own work).
- Voices have to be off during work times.
- Work carefully the first time so that you don't have fix ups because of messy work.
- Follow directions the first time.
- Walk in the halls so that we don't fall down or disrupt the other students.
- No talking in the bathroom.
- Homework should go home almost every day. Please have your child read it several times, sign it and return it.
- Work hard in class so when it is play time we can all join in!

Thank you for reading these expectations. It helps your child be successful when s/he can talk about what's expected at school.

The Red Group is taught by Ms. McCool and have been bringing homework home for two weeks now! Please have your student sound out each word without stopping between the sounds, then say the fast way. You can't read these words too much. Save all of the homework that comes home with a star on it. You can use this as an activity when special guests visit or over the weekend. Red Group has learned the new sounds, /g/ and /u/. We are practicing sounding out words in our brain and then saying it the fast way. This is tough stuff!

The Blue Group is taught by Mrs. B and is making great headway! They are such solid readers that they are able to skip some of the lessons. Very soon this group will be reading from the books! Please have your student read the homework every night. They may be able to read some of the words

without sounding out. Read the homework several times, sign and return the next day. Save all of the homework when it comes home with a star on it. You can use this as an activity when special guests visit or over the weekend. Blue Group has learned the new sounds /sh/ and /w/. Wow, these are some great readers!

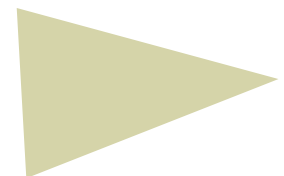
The Red Group is taught by Ms. Thomas and has just started having reading checkouts. This is a very big deal in the whole school. After every fifth lesson each student reads the story again. We record how many words were read in 1 minute and how many mistakes were made. The goal is to read 16 words in 1 minute with no more than 2 mistakes. Everyone has passed the first checkouts! They have also learned the new sound /p/.

The big math group is taught by Ms. Thomas has begun take away story problems. These can make a fun game at home or in the car! They sound like, "There were 5 dogs at the park, 1 dog went home. How many dogs are still at the park?" Have your child make up his/her own story problems for you to work!

The small math group is taught by Ms. McCool. We have come such a long way from where we started! We are counting to 30 and reading up to 19. This group is getting to be great at adding numbers!

Thank you for all you do to help your child be his/her best! Please email, stop in or call me to talk about anything regarding the school!

Ms. McCool
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First Grade Loves February!

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Here we are in February 2010! First grade is sure going fast! This group is really working hard and learning so much to help them get ready for second grade. I am very proud of them.

Valentines Day is just around the corner. Due to the holiday being on a Sunday this year, we will be celebrating the Friday before. The first grade Valentines Party will be on Friday February 12, from around 2:20 until the end of school. I will be providing a class list very soon for students who wish to bring Valentines to school to pass out to their friends.

Our class started a new language program called Reasoning and Writing this last week. It builds on concepts practiced in Language For Thinking, yet adds other exciting elements the students enjoy. We begin with a short oral lesson and then proceed to their orange workbook, which includes other exercises. Students are learning about true and false, sequencing, and story composition. I end every lesson by reading them an incredible story and then they color a picture from a certain part of the story. So far we have read about Paul and Cindy the Squid. Ask your child about them!

First Grade Reading:

Red Group: Hooray for Red group for finishing Reading Mastery I this week! This group worked very hard to get all their work done and are following along well in their storybooks. In Reading Mastery II the stories will begin getting longer and include more details. The students will refer to Reading Mastery II as the "purple book." We are working on fluency development (reading becomes a fluid motion, without stops and awkward pauses). Homework is something that they should practice reading without stopping, as well as reading a second time with you asking them questions about what they are reading. Keep it up Red!

Blue Group: It is great to teach Blue group again. This group is working hard on the "e" rule. It is a very difficult concept for students to grasp the difference between "hop" and "hope" but these students are really working at it. The stories they bring home have many sentences that test their knowledge of the "e" rule. We are currently reading a story about a pet goat that eats "cans" and "canes." If your child is struggling at home with this concept, remind them to look at the end of the word and remember the rule about the "e." Great Job Blue!

Yellow Group: Mr. Seiter is now teaching this group and he is very excited for all the progress they are making. This group is more than halfway through Reading Mastery II and still going strong. They are reading longer stories with more chapters to them. The papers the students get each day require them to search for answers in their storybook. Spelling and grammar need to be correct, and these students are rising to the challenge! Keep an eye on your child's fix ups to see what mistakes they are making in reading. It is a great way to know what else you can do at home to help them be successful.

Core this month: Human Body and Healthy Choices, Maya Inca and Aztec, Valentines Day.

Birthday Celebrations for February will be on February 26th.





Catch Up With The 2nd Graders

Hi Parents! Welcome to February! We've been having lots of fun in 2nd grade. We finished up our unit on digestion (check out our display of the digestive system in the hallway), and are now learning about magnetism. As February is Black History Month, we will also be discussing that subject as well.

I wanted to add a quick note that some of the students have been having a little bit of difficulty getting their daily work completed in a timely manner. The students have a 45 minute independent work block every morning, as well as 15 minutes following recess. We typically have other times during the day for them to work on "fix-ups" as well, so there is plenty of time in the day to finish their work, if students use it wisely. Many of the students do a great job getting their work done every day, but some are not meeting the class expectations. To help with this I keep the folders of students who are having difficulty getting their work done (until they are caught up) and they need to come to me to get each fix up. This helps me be more aware of how long it is taking students to get through their work, as well as letting them know that I'm aware. What you can do is check your student's home folder every day. Kids should have quite a bit of starred work every day. They should (with rare exception) have reading homework, starred reading work, starred math work, and a starred math sheet. There should be spelling papers, reasoning & writing and cursive mixed in there as well. I have begun writing the date of the fix up on each piece of paper, so check out the dates on the work your student is bringing home as well. I work hard to encourage kids to get their work done. If kids get all of their fix ups done one day, the next day they get their name on the "no fix up list" on the board, and they can use items from the "brain box" (a few building toys, brain teasers, special books, etc.). Please talk to your kids about how they're doing with getting their work done. Thanks!

The Cats Reading group is continuing to fast cycle their way through RM II. They are doing a great job, "scoring 90% or higher on their daily work nearly every day. This is a group of kids who work hard and are well on their way to becoming great readers. We have just begun reading a story about a genie named Ott and his master named Carla. These stories are definitely a step up on the difficulty level, so please be sure to continue to have your student practice at home by reading their homework every night. Also, it's great if you can ask them questions about what they're reading to help them focus on comprehension as well. We also have been practicing reading with expression, so please encourage this with your reader.

The Purple Reading group is continuing in RM III. This is a group of good readers, but they are having some difficulty with their daily work. Typically, they know the answers, but do not pay attention to the details of the directions, and so often miss the item. This group has been very consistent about doing their daily homework. You can help them by asking questions about

what they are reading. I am confident that with a little attention to detail this group will be back on track in no time!

Mr. Seiter's Yellow group is continuing with their story about Linda & Kathy; 2 sisters who are stranded on a desert island and have to rely on their own ingenuity to survive. There are some very complicated things that the students are learning, such as how simple machines work. One thing that the majority of the group is struggling with is some basic geography. There have been questions in their work about what places are in the United States and what aren't, and they have had a little trouble. Mr. Seiter is reviewing this with them every day. If you can help them by asking them about the difference between other countries and about states and cities in the United States it would be helpful. Also, most of this group has done a fantastic job turning in their homework, but there are a few kiddos who need to work a little harder to get this done consistently. Please encourage your student to do their homework every day. It can even be as simple as reading it in the car to you on the way to or from school. Thanks for your support!

My Math Stars group is doing absolutely fantastic! We "did the math" a couple of days ago & realized that we are about 30 lessons away from beginning CMC C (the next level). We have learned how to carry, count by 2, 5, 10, 9 (my favorite), and are working with money problems. We also are working with calendars quite a bit, looking at what number is 2 weeks after the 6th, 2 days after the 6th, etc. These are all things that your student would love to show you! They are hard workers and I'm proud of them all!

Mr. Seiter's Math group has been having some trouble in their daily work. It seems to me that they need to slow down and pay a little more attention to the details of their work, such as when to borrow, or just making simple mistakes in basic addition & subtraction. We are working hard with this group to help them slow down and pay attention to what they are doing. I have every confidence that within a couple of weeks they'll be back on track and cruising through CMC C!

As always, I'm so privileged to teach these kids. Please contact me with any questions, and thanks so much!

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Happy February From 3rd Grade

As Valentine's Day is fast approaching, I will be sending you a list of kids so that each family can contribute valentines if they'd like. Our party will be on Friday the 12th around 2:30. More details to come.

Reading

RM 4 Red Group-I am thrilled that this group has made the move up to Reading Mastery 4! So far, we have learned about geese migration and are now reading about Alaska. One area that could use some improvement is taking the time to produce quality daily work. Their test this week went great, but some of the daily work isn't what it should be. We will work on checking our answers to be sure they are what we want. I know these guys can do it.

RM 5 Blue Group-Another group who has just hopped up to a new book! Wow. These kids all passed their RM 4 test with flying colors and are as excited as I am about starting RM 5. It is a truly wonderful book, but it does come with its challenges. The program is geared toward older readers, but I know this group is ready to work hard. They will still be bringing their stories home each day so they can read to you, get it signed & bring it back to me.

RM 5 Pinky Group-Mr. Seiter's group has been reading *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* and just took their first RM 5 test on the 2nd. Overall, the test went great and it should have come home to you. Getting used to the new requirements of the daily work has been challenging. Writing in complete sentences and paragraphs is required and is different from the work in RM 4. I think they will get the hang of it as they get more practice. I know they're enjoying the book!

RM 5 Mrs. Shaw's Group-This groups continues to impress. They are currently reading *Beauty & The Beast* and writing some wonderful stories to go along with it. They should be taking test 8 shortly. Keep it up!

Math

My math group just finished lesson 98 in CMC C. We just completed a cumulative test after lesson 90 and the results were impressive overall. Some of the main concepts we're working on are multiplication with 3 digits on the top, fractions and all kinds of number family word problems. Math facts are still extremely important to practice at home: +, -, /, x.

Mr. Seiter's math group is working on lesson 33 in CMC D. They just passed their first cumulative test of the book-yippee! Way to go everyone. The group is working on division, turning fractions into whole numbers and several types of number family problems. They have been consistently turning in good work.

Core

As I'm sure you know, we just finished a health unit. I really enjoyed teaching the kids about a variety of factors that influence our health, such as tobacco, self-esteem, nutrition and the environment. I have collected recipes from most of the kids and will soon be asking for some volunteers to help put them together for our recipe books.

This week, we've been taking a quick look at portraits. The kids have done self-portraits in pencil and will also be painting them. You can expect to see them at home in the near future. Very fun!



Happy February 4th Graders!

Happy Valentine's Day everyone! I hope everyone has something fun planned for this lovely holiday.

Red group is continuing to work with Mrs. Shaw in RM 4. We have just finished up stories about the Iditarod, the sled dog race in Alaska. The students learned about how Musher's survive in harsh weather, some interesting facts about sled dogs, and how strong and smart they can be. Pinky group is now working with Mr. Seiter and has started RM 5! Congratulations Pinky group! They are reading *The Wizard of Oz* and learning about Fiction. Blue group is continuing to work with Mrs. Shaw. We are reading *Beauty and the Beast*. It is interesting to see how this is different than the movie that we are all familiar with. This is finishing up a unit on stories with morals. We read some Greek and Roman myths that taught about greed and kindness. *Beauty and the Beast* is wrapping up these concepts. Purple group is continuing to work with Mrs. Brucker (Mrs. B). They are reading a story called *The Cruise of the Dazzler*, by Jack London. It is about a boy called the Frisco Kid who decides to run away and start a new life, but he gets caught up with some pirates and has to make some tough decisions. He learns interesting life lessons through this adventure-filled and thrilling tale!

In math, Green group is now working with Ms. Thomas. They are continuing to work on double-digit multiplication and some division. They have also gotten pretty far into fractions. They are adding, subtracting and multiplying fractions. They are also turning mixed numbers into fractions and turning fractions into mixed numbers. As always, it would help this group to work on their counting by numbers to get their math facts more fluent. They should be able to count by 1's, 2's, 3's, 4's, 5's, 7's, 9's, 10's, 25's, 50's and 100's. Please feel free to work on any of these things at home with your student. Yellow group is now working with Mrs. Shaw. They are continuing to do the in, out, and end up problems, but now the program throws in these super easy problems that throw them off. They are having trouble thinking about what kind of problem they are supposed to do. Sometimes they over analyze the problems, so they need to make sure they read the problems very closely before they panic. Also, they are still doing ratio equations. They are now doing them with units other than time, weight, and length. They just started working with probability. We have been talking about how many trials it will take to pull out a winner. For example, if there are five black stones and three white stones, which one would you expect to pull out? The more likely would be called "the winner."

The state writing test will be given most likely starting on Wednesday, February 10th. We are also in the middle of the OAKS state tests. During this time, please make sure your students are getting plenty of rest and eating good balanced breakfasts to prepare them for this intense mental workout.

As always, reading logs are due as soon as they are finished. Please make sure this is something your student is working on at home.

I will be sending out a book order soon. The due date will be Friday, February 19. Please do not send cash, although do feel free to submit your order online at www.scholastic.com. Again thank you to all the parents who have helped out in the classroom so far; your help is greatly appreciated. Please feel free to contact me by phone or email with any questions or concerns. mammarainy@aim.com

Happy month of love, 5th grade families!

With the science fair and OAKS testing right around the corner, the 5th graders are extremely busy this month. It seems like we have been working toward these two events all year long, and now it is time to show off how much they've learned. I'm already so proud!

Reading

I am delighted with Mrs. Brucker's **Wolves** group. They are learning words with pronunciations that we have to look up on the computer because they are so aphonetic. These kids have read about acquisitive pirates and mythical fantasies, and they are doing awesomely on their daily work. Keep it up! My **Speedy-Repeaters** are rolling through the end of RM V with *The Prince and The Pauper*. This is a very tough story with strange vocab. They are doing well with remembering the details, but struggle with finding supporting details. Keep up the good work by continuing to return your homework everyday; it made a big difference in passing the last checkout. Ali and Nekole turned in their homework every morning! Spectacular! Mr. Seiter's **Pinkie group** has started in RM V with the Wizard of Oz stories. These stories will help them to identify some US states and labeling detailed maps. This group must focus on writing their answers in a complete sentence or paragraph. Try repeating the question in your answers so that someone not in your group could understand your response. Mrs. Shaw's **Red group** has really improved their comprehension and their daily work is earning higher scores. This is extra-impressive as they are reading the detailed adventures of Al flying through space. The **Decoding group** is now doing 2 lessons a day! Check-outs are becoming a breeze and the homework keeps on comin'! Now its back to the crazy story about the con man and his adventures. You're doing so awesome! I'm very proud of all of my 5th grade readers!

Math

The groove I felt last month in all math groups is coming to a halt. All 3 groups have learned so much recently that it is getting jumbled in their brains, and there is confusion on how to get started on each problem. The Independent Section of each lesson is the time to practice sorting these struggles out, and it needs to be completely finished each day. My **Jaguars** are struggling with difficult geometry questions about angle degrees and finding the area of different shapes. The **Yellow group**, now taught by Mrs. Shaw, is still doing ratio equations, but now use different units of time, weight and length. They've just started probability problems, which are fun but also mentally challenging. The **Green group**, taught by Mrs. Thomas, started with the OAKS test this week, but will resume working on their double-digit multiplication as soon as they are finished. This group should continue to practice their count-by's at home, and if math sheets start to pile up, the student should take them home to finish.

In Core, we have explored atoms with protons and neutrons, and joined elements to make compounds. We continue to conduct experiments and practice making hypotheses. Our Science Fair is in just about 2 weeks. Please contact me if you have any questions about it, or anything else I can help you with.

Thanks for all your help with your children this month!
-Mrs. Hoeksema

